

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 06 DECEMBER 2009

You are listening to ZS6SRL, the official radio station of the South African Radio League, the national body for amateur radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a web-stream, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details. PLEASE NOTE: for audio via Echolink, connect to ZS0JPL-R.

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Your newsreader this morning is (name), (call sign), on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria, with relays on 28,325; 14,235; 10,130, 7,066 and 3,695 MHz SSB, as well as 52,750; 438,825 and 1 296 MHz FM in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit.)

In the news today:

ARRL'S LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD REACHES NEW MILESTONES

STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT ON OSCARS

ICOM CONFIRMS IC-706 PRODUCTION HAS NOT CEASED

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these and other important and interesting news items.

ARRL'S LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD REACHES NEW MILESTONES

Since its inception on September 15, 2003, more than 30 000 radio amateurs have signed on to Logbook of The World (LoTW), ARRL's online logging program – an increase of more than 7 000 amateurs since 2008. These 30 000 amateurs have made upwards of 250 million QSOs – more than 58 million QSOs in 2009 alone. In 2009, there was an increase of more than 24 percent for both the number of registered users and the number of QSOs over 2008.

The LoTW system is a repository of log records submitted by amateurs from around the world. When both participants in a QSO submit matching QSO records to LoTW, the result is a QSL that can be used for ARRL award credit. While US amateurs do not need to be members of the ARRL to use LoTW, only members can use LoTW to apply for ARRL awards, such as DXCC and Worked All States (WAS). Some awards, like the Triple Play Award, only use LoTW credits instead of traditional QSL cards (foreign amateurs do not need to be ARRL members to apply for ARRL awards).

When an amateur uses LoTW to apply for an ARRL award, the award is processed much faster than if they are sent in traditional cards. According to Administrative Manager for the ARRL Membership and Volunteer Programs Department Sharon Taratula, an award applied for via LoTW can be processed in 24 hours versus sending in the cards. "Cards could take anywhere from 6-8

weeks,” she explained.” It is definitely much quicker to apply for awards via Logbook of The World.”

Logbook of The World Specialist Kathy Allison, KA1RWY, said she answers more than 500 questions and inquiries each month from amateurs, ranging from replacing lost certificates, obtaining additional certificates and getting started in Logbook, as well as guiding people through the directions on how to enter in their QSOs. In November 2009, Allison answered 532 questions that came in via e-mail (no statistics are kept on the number of phone calls concerning LoTW, but Taratula estimated that it’s “at least several hundred a month”).

“One of the more common questions we receive has to do with using LoTW on multiple computers,” Allison explained. “Now that a lot of people have a desktop computer and a laptop computer, we get this question a lot. We also get a lot of questions about what to do when a computer crashes.” There are step-by-step instructions – with pictures – on how to navigate Logbook on the LoTW Web page.

“Logbook is not only for the serious DXer or contester – it’s for any active amateur,” said ARRL Membership and Volunteer Programs Department Manager Dave Patton, NN1N. “Even though we knew that Logbook of The World would explode in its popularity, 250 million QSOs in roughly the first six years of its existence show that LoTW’s concept and ideas have worked beyond our expectations as we continue to improve and expand the system.”

STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT ON OSCAR 2010

AMSAT is inviting radio amateurs worldwide to participate in Straight Key Night on OSCAR 2010. Taking part in this event is both fun and quite easy. Just operate CW through any OSCAR satellite between 00:00 and 24:00 UTC on 1 January 2010, using a straight hand key. There are no other rules, no scoring and no need to send in a log.

In keeping with the friendly nature of this event, all participants are encouraged to nominate someone they worked for “Best Fist” of those you worked. Please send your nomination to w2rs@amsat.org. A list of those nominated will appear in the AMSAT News Service and will also be published in the AMSAT Journal.

RADIO BUSINESS: ICOM CONFIRMS IC-706 PRODUCTION HAS NOT CEASED

Contrary to Internet rumors production of the popular IC 706 Mark 2 G has not ceased. The erroneous report of the radio’s demise came in a Wireless Institute of Australia news report that said that the 706 was no longer being made and that Navcom Electronics that there are only 14 units currently held in stock in Australia.

While that might be the case down-under, Amateur Radio Newline has received word from Icom America that the decision to stop selling the IC - 706 was likely

a one made by Icom Australia. On this side of the Pacific Icom America says that the IC - 706 MK 2 G will continue in the Icom America product line.

The original IC-706 was introduced over a dozen years ago and quickly developed what might best be described as a cult following. The radio was not all that much bigger than a dual-band FM transceiver of that era, but it packed an amazingly sensitive all band receiver and powerful amateur band transmitter into a relatively tiny package measuring only 167 x 58 x 200 mm.

Over the years the IC-706 has seen many upgrades. The latest version is the Mark II G which adds many new features and capabilities not found in the previous 706 and 706Mk II versions including the UT-106 DSP module as a standard feature. Many amateurs called it the perfect mobile and portable station and stayed with it even after rival manufacturers brought out their own tiny all band transceivers with similar or even more advanced features. Its also a radio with one of the highest resale values on the used equipment market.

Also included in the WIA story was a claim that Icom was instituting a five year warranty on all of its products. Well that's true only if you live in Australia. According to Icom America, that is an Icom Australia only project. No other Icom distributor is offering a 5 year warranty. (ARNewslineT)

CONTEST NEWS

The annual PEARS HF competition starts at 14:00 and ends at 18:00 CAT this afternoon. It is a phone competition with activity on 7,060 to 7,100 and 7,130 to 7,200 MHz as well as 3,603 to 3,650 and 3,700 to 3,800 MHz. There are four classes of participation: Novice - stations with ZU prefixes; Restricted - stations with ZR prefixes; Unlimited - stations with ZS prefixes, and lastly; DX - stations outside South Africa.

The exchange is the operator's call sign, a signal report and the operator's name. Full details are available on the PEARS website at www.zs2pe.co.za as well as in the 2009 SARL Competition Handbook.

ARRL 10 Metre Contest. The ARRL 10 Metre Contest will be run over the weekend of 12 and 13 December. It is CW and phone activity and operators may only work 36 hours out of the 48 hours, listening time counts as operating time.

Stations in the USA and Canada will give a RS(T) report and their state or province abbreviation. All other stations will give a RS(T) report and a serial number starting at 001. The contest rules are available on the ARRL web site as well as in HF Happenings 382.

There are about 30 radio amateurs on the East Rand who are challenging radio amateurs in South Africa to get on the air for the ARRL 10 metre contest

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is still at low levels.

The surface of the sun has been blank of any sunspots for more than eleven days in a row.

20 and 15 m will provide the best opportunities for DX. Conditions to India will be good from the afternoon onwards. During the late afternoons and early evenings it will be moderate towards Europa. In the afternoon there is a good possibility of contacts with the USA on 15 m. Contacts with New-Zeeland and Australia will be possible for a short while on 15 m during the mornings. During the afternoons and evenings 20 and 15 m contacts may be possible with Brazil.

Local conditions are going to be good on 40 m during the day time. 80 m may perform well during the early mornings and late afternoons over the shorter distances. 30 m will perform well over the longer distances during the middle of the day. With summer here 20 m is also once again very useful for contacts over the longer distances.

80 m is the frequency of choice in the evenings.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

5 December West Rand Flea market; 6 December PEARS HF Contest, 14:00 - 18:00; 18 December closing date for the PEARS raffle; 1 January 2010 - Straight key night on OSCARS; 12 - 13 December - ARRL 10 Metre Contest; 15 January 2010 closing date for the essay competition; 15 to 17 January 2010 the PEARS VHF/UHF Contest.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news items, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans only to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp, not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to Amateur Radio Mirror International every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria-area, with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 860 kHz. There is also a podcast by ZS6RO. For a web-stream and Echolink by ZS6FCS, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on 'ARMI' and follow the links. A repeat transmission can be heard on Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz.

Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies. You have listened to a bulletin of the South African Radio League, compiled by Dennis, ZS4BS. The editor was Jannie, ZR6PHD.

Thank you for listening, 73. /EX